



Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired)

July 29, 1934 - September 27, 2025

Obituary for Colonel John B. Airola, USMC (Retired)

Colonel John Battista Airola, USMC (Ret.), age 91, of Huntsville, Texas, passed away peacefully on September 27, 2025 surrounded by his family. John was born on July 29, 1934, on his parents' dairy farm in Houston, Texas, to Battista and Teresa Airola. He grew up with his siblings Joe Airola (deceased), Annie Hagler, Mary Smith, and Margaret Airola (deceased) learning early the value of hard work, family, and service.

He graduated from Sam Houston State University in the summer of 1955 with a bachelor's degree before beginning his distinguished military career. John enlisted in the United States Marine Corps on August 10, 1955, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on April 1, 1957, after completing Officer Candidate School. He proudly served his country for more than three decades, including a tour in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" to denote valor. He retired on July 1, 1987, with the rank of Colonel.

Following the conclusion of his military career, John returned to his Texas roots, retiring to his farm in Huntsville in 1987. Never one to sit still, he continued serving his community as a firefighter with the Crabbs Prairie Volunteer Fire Department and as a founder and dedicated volunteer of the HEARTS Veterans Museum, where he poured his energy into honoring fellow veterans and educating countless visitors about military history. He loved working on his farm, where over the years he grew a large garden and

orchard, and raised cattle, horses, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and noisy guinea hens. John learned to weld and single-handedly built pipe fencing throughout his property. He created a wonderful environment for family visits.

John's life was marked by love and devotion to family. He married Kay Jackson on July 1, 1960, and they shared 29 years together until her passing on January 16, 1990. On June 30, 1995, he married Sherry Holloway, with whom he shared 17 years until her passing on May 21, 2012.

He is survived by his children: Eric Airola and wife Denise; David Airola and wife Debbie; Glenn Airola and wife Michelle; and Susan Airola-Skully and husband Chris. He was the proud grandfather of Kaitlin Thayer (Bryan), Lauren Liftee (Elika), Shannon Madrid (Christian), Danielle Airola (Dan Turner), Alex Airola, Holly Airola, Colin Airola, Nicholas Airola, Sarah Vrijland (Luke), and Daniel Airola. He was also blessed with great-grandchildren Madelyn and Benjamin Thayer, who brought him great joy in his later years. John will be remembered for his deep sense of duty, his tireless work ethic, steadfast love for his family, and his dedication to service—both to his country and to his community. His legacy lives on in the lives of all who were fortunate to know him.

Visitation will take place at 9:00 AM and funeral service will begin at 10:00 AM with full military honors at the First United Methodist Church of Huntsville on Monday, October 6, 2025, with a reception to follow at the community life center and then interment at Earthman Resthaven Funeral Home & Cemetery in Houston.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the HEARTS Veterans Museum of Texas in honor of John's lifelong commitment to service. Memorial condolences to the family may be made at www.shmfh.com.

Cemetery Details

Earthman Resthaven Cemetery - Houston

13102 North Fwy
Houston, TX 77060

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 6. 9:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
1016 Sam Houston Ave
Huntsville, TX 77320-3999
(936) 295-5441

Funeral Service

OCT 6. 10:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
1016 Sam Houston Ave
Huntsville, TX 77320-3999
(936) 295-5441

Interment

OCT 6. 3:00 PM (CT)

Earthman Resthaven Cemetery - Houston
13102 North Fwy
Houston, TX 77060

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired).

October 05, 2025 at 01:54 PM



“ The Keane Girls purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired).



The Keane Girls - October 04, 2025 at 11:18 AM



“ Charlotte Efird lit a candle in memory of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired)



Charlotte Efird - October 01, 2025 at 08:28 PM

JC

“ So sorry to hear of the Colonel's passing. He was truly a great neighbor just living down the road from our home place. I never will forget when my grandmother died, and the funeral procession was headed to the grave site. He happened to be walking that day and when he saw us, he stopped, stood at attention with his hand over his heart until we passed. That memory of him has stuck with me for years. Condolences and prayers to the family!
The Stutts Family

Jana Stutts Certa - October 01, 2025 at 12:34 PM

MF

“ Marvin Hyvl & Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired)



Marvin Hyvl & Family - September 30, 2025 at 12:28 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired).



September 30, 2025 at 11:51 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired).

September 30, 2025 at 11:51 AM

GK

“ *Gayle Kelly lit a candle in memory of Col. John Battista Airola, USMC (Retired)*



Gayle Kelly - September 30, 2025 at 11:26 AM